

# SOCIAL MEDIA & MOBILE DEVICES POLICY

This document applies to all Council employees except:

- All school based employees

*This document may not be applicable to employees who transferred into LCC under TUPE legislation and remain on the terms and conditions of their previous organisation.*

<b>Last Review</b>	October 2016
<b>Next Scheduled Review</b>	October 2019
<b>Last Updated</b>	October 2016

## CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION .....	1
SOCIAL MEDIA .....	1
USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA AT WORK .....	1
MONITORING USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA DURING WORK TIME .....	2
PERSONAL MOBILE DEVICES .....	2
SOCIAL MEDIA & PERSONAL DEVICES MISUSE .....	2
RESPONSIBILITIES .....	3
DIRECTORS AND ASSISTANT DIRECTOR LEVEL .....	3
SERVICE MANAGER - PEOPLE MANAGEMENT .....	3
DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT TEAM (DET) .....	3
MANAGERS .....	3
HR ADVISERS .....	3
ADVICE AND SUPPORT .....	3
FURTHER INFORMATION .....	3
APPENDIX 1 - PERSONAL USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA .....	4
LEGAL ISSUES .....	4
DEFAMATION .....	5
IMAGES .....	5

## **INTRODUCTION**

This policy defines the requirements for the personal use of social media and personal electronic devices at work.

It supports other Council policies in this area, including the Corporate Information Security Policy and the Council's Code of Conduct. It should be read in conjunction with the Digital Engagement Team (DET) Social Media Policy.

The use of Council approved social media websites, channels and feeds, along with further guidance on the use of social media sites, is covered by the [DET Social Media Policy](#).

## **SOCIAL MEDIA**

For the purposes of this policy, social media is a type of interactive online media that allows parties to communicate instantly with each other or to share data in a public forum.

This includes online social forums such as Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn. Social media also covers blogs and video- and image-sharing websites such as YouTube and Flickr.

There are many more examples of social media than can be listed here and this is a constantly changing area.

## **USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA AT WORK**

Personal use of social media is permitted provided that the Corporate Information Security Policy is adhered to and it does not impact on an employee's job or interfere with the performance of other work colleagues doing their job.

The use of personal social media must be during employees own time, for example, before starting work, during breaks or after work. Any exceptions to this must be agreed in advance by the employee's line manager.

Employees are permitted to use Council approved social media websites and feeds as part of their normal work duties and if agreed in advance with the employee's line manager.

In some circumstances, personal social media channels may be used for professional purposes while at work. The conditions for this must be agreed in advance with the employee's line manager.

Employees are permitted to use the Council's computers or devices and/or their own computers or devices in the workplace to access personal social media provided that this is during their own time, for example, before starting work, during breaks or after work. Any exceptions to this must be agreed in advance by the employee's line manager.

The use of Council computers or devices for personal use outside of normal working hours must comply with the Corporate Information Security Policy and only take place with prior manager approval.

Under normal circumstances, the use of Council computers or devices for personal use outside of normal working hours is not permitted.

## **MONITORING USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA DURING WORK TIME**

The Council monitors employees' internet/social media usage whilst using Council devices.

The Council considers that valid reasons for checking an employee's internet/social media usage include suspicions that the employee has:

- been spending an excessive amount of time using social media sites for non-work-related activity
- acted in a way that is in breach of the rules set out in this policy
- breached the Code of Conduct

Access to particular social media sites is likely to be withdrawn in cases of misuse.

## **PERSONAL MOBILE DEVICES**

Personal mobile devices and phones should not be used excessively during work hours.

Reasonable use of a personal mobile device is permitted for making or receiving calls in the event of an emergency or for exceptional personal reasons.

Employees should also recognise that ringtones can be disruptive to other work colleagues and accordingly, the manager may request that personal mobile devices be set to 'silent mode' during working hours.

In cases where a manager considers that an employee is making or receiving an unreasonable amount of personal calls or text messages during working hours, they are permitted to reasonably request that the employee turns off their mobile device during working hours.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA & PERSONAL DEVICES MISUSE**

Breaches of this policy and the [DET Social Media Policy](#) may lead to disciplinary action.

Serious breaches of this policy, for example bullying, use of inappropriate language, accessing inappropriate and/or offensive channels or social media activity causing serious damage to the Council, may constitute gross misconduct and lead to summary dismissal.

Disciplinary action may be considered where employees continue to use personal devices after such requests and/or fail to comply with the original request to turn off their device.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **DIRECTORS AND ASSISTANT DIRECTOR LEVEL**

The Management Team is responsible for ensuring that employees are aware of their work-related and personal responsibilities.

### **SERVICE MANAGER - PEOPLE MANAGEMENT**

Review and revise this policy as necessary.

### **DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT TEAM (DET)**

The DET has overall editorial control of all LCC-owned websites and must be contacted to discuss a digital strategy for any LCC-related project.

The DET will advise on the quality of page content and social media channels in order to maximise engagement. Pages and social media channels which do not meet with the agreed web standards may be removed.

### **MANAGERS**

All managers are responsible for ensuring that those in their teams understand this policy and abide by it, and for giving guidance on the appropriate use of social media sites in the workplace.

### **HR ADVISERS**

HR Advisers are responsible for advising and supporting managers in the application of the policy.

### **ADVICE AND SUPPORT**

Advice and guidance may be obtained by contacting the Digital Engagement Team, Legal Services or HR, depending on the issue.

### **FURTHER INFORMATION**

[Code of Conduct](#)

[Corporate Information Security Policy](#)

[Digital Engagement Team Social Media Policy](#)

## **APPENDIX 1 - PERSONAL USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA**

While accounts of Council employees are their own business, it is still possible for the content posted on them to affect their professional standing and/or that of their employer.

To mitigate this risk, employees may not wish to include any reference to, or post comments about, the Council, their job role, colleagues, or partner organisations.

If, however, they do wish to make reference to their employment with the Council on a personal social media profile, they must ensure the following actions:

- Declare somewhere on their page or biography that the views expressed are theirs alone and do not reflect the views of Lincolnshire County Council
- Do not bring the Council into disrepute (see LCC Intranet for the Internet Code of Practice and Guidance)
- Do not reveal any potentially confidential or sensitive information about the Council that they may have come across in their work duties
- Do not use any Council-owned images or logos
- Do not include contact details or photographs of service users or work colleagues
- Where possible, refrain from accepting service users or ex-service users as 'friends'
- Do not make offensive comments about the Council, members, colleagues or members of the public as this is a disciplinary offence and may lead to disciplinary action

In some circumstances, personal social media channels may be used for professional purposes while at work. The conditions for this must be agreed in advance with the employee's line manager.

### **LEGAL ISSUES**

Employers can be held legally responsible for online content published by their employees. Employees should take the following into consideration when using social media:

- Be aware of the overall Council policy and guidelines for using social media, whether this is for personal use or as a part of their working role.
- Be familiar with the legal issues and risks before posting about colleagues or sharing information about the Council.
- Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations forbids creating fake blogs, falsely representing oneself as a customer and falsely advertising on social media sites.

Examples of social media activities outlawed under the Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations are:

- Creating fake blogs ('ghosting')
- Falsely representing oneself as a customer
- Falsely advertising on social media sites

## **DEFAMATION**

Defamation is the act of making a statement about a person or company that is considered to harm reputation, for example, by lowering others' estimation of the person or company, or by causing them to lose their rank or professional standing.

If the defamatory statement is written down (in print or online) it is known as libel. If it is spoken, it is known as slander.

Posting a defamatory statement online or recording it on a podcast would both be examples of libel.

## **IMAGES**

It is illegal to use graphics or photographs from the internet without permission. Ensure that anyone giving permission to use an image is the original copyright owner.

Check the licensing agreement of photographs in any existing archives before use.

Do not take or use any photographs of children who appear to be under the age of 18 without permission from a parent or guardian.

Permission is non-transferable from a third party.